

An Essay  
on  
Rational Medicine

Respectfully submitted  
to the faculty of the  
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## Rational Medicine

In taking up this subject, as the theme of our essay, we are conscious of our inability to write anything that will have the impress of originality. Everything perhaps that we will write has been written again and again by others, but, when we hear such honorable and reverential expressions, as Regular, Rational, and very many others applied to the Practice of Medicine, we very naturally wish to understand their import and their truthfulness.

Many have doubtless been misled by a high-sounding title or awed by a great name but we will endeavor to examine both and see we are either betrayed into error or subdued into bondage.

Rational signifies according to reason or reasonable, and Medicine, in this connection, the use of remedies; both taken together the meaning is. The best and wisest way of preparing, and most proper mode of administering medicines. Taking this definition

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then as an exposition of the term, we will take into consideration the claims of the different schools to the title, and what seems to us to be a system worthy of so honorable an appellation.

We have no certain knowledge of the first appearance of disease in our world; all that we know is, that death has been the common lot of man; but whether it has been generally preceded by disease throughout his whole history, we are not credibly informed. No doubt diseases have been prevalent from a very early period, and the history of medicine were it all written would date back nearly if not quite as far, so we have had diseases and modes of treating those diseases for a long time.

Now man's boasted reason obviously could never teach him the Medicinal properties of drugs, or any of their effects upon the structure, or functions, of the human organism. This knowledge has been always obtained by experience and only by experience. Now

experience is founded, either upon accident, or upon experiment. Upon these must rest the whole superstructure of whatever system exists in medicine; and while we examine into the knowledge they afford us we will also look into the merits of that knowledge or in other words which is most likely to afford us unmixed and uncontaminated Truth.

Accidents happen or may occur at all times and in all places. We may or may not have an opportunity of being present when they occur, and if we are present, our minds may not be in proper train to take cognisance of all the facts developed. A thousand circumstances may be overlooked, which have an important bearing upon the case, and which would perhaps change the whole state of affairs. They are isolated. Here and there. These and many more objections lead us to doubt the experience obtained from an accident. But if this <sup>one</sup> support of all medical knowledge is so weak so precarious how far from

being well founded and trustworthy must be a system founded almost if not solely upon such a base. It certainly can have but slight claims to be considered a rational system, and certainly nothing but egotism could suggest the claim of being the only regular, and rational school. But is there anything that resembles the above picture? Is there a prototype? We might ask with one exception is there anything else to be found but examples of such systems, even if we may so far prostitute the term system as to confine it upon such collections of asserted facts and crazy theories. Hundreds of systems have been heralded to the world that never had a single careful experiment instituted to test their reality. Theories of disease in general have arisen from the brain of the closeted and unpractical Philosopher and have been born of the intellect of the practical but unlearned agriculturist. Every one of the host of discoverers have laid claim to the title of Rational

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and applied it to his system and to none else, but experiment, the touch stone of discoveries in science has dissipated the hopes of the world and consigned the new wreck to the tomb of Oblivion.

That system of Practice which ~~now~~ holds sway at present and whose members are so very anxious to be considered the only regular practitioners of the healing art claims our first attention when we attempt to go into detail. Now in what does its ~~merits~~ consist. It claims in the first place to have the sanction of centuries, the authority of age. But does wisdom fol. now age? are we to look for sound doctrines and right views in scientific matters among the musty records of the past, and bow to the dictates of antiquity in Medicine when in every other branch of Human Knowledge we discard the doctrines of the past? Certainly not! When did a new truth appear that

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did not have to contend with hoary error. Was the discoverer of the circulation the great Harvey who broke through the darkness of the vascular system and demonstrated that blood and not air flowed through what was and is still called arteries; was he honored? Did not the same cry arise from the dull followers of the errors of former ages as we still hear urged against the advancement made in our own times? Need we cite the case of the immortal Jenner who came with a weapon more potent than disease and which has been able to ward off the deadliest instrument ever used by the grim Tyrant? He was looked upon as an impostor by the Medical Profession and as a heretic by the blind and bigoted minister of the prevailing religion. But posterity honor him and the discovery he made is looked upon as the precious gift of the Creator to his fallen yet ever pitied creatures. And

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so of every other great discovery or valuable invention in the healing art. At first decried and its author persecuted then examined and adopted and the discoverer or inventor looked up to with gratitude.

So we see that this claim is worth just nothing even if we look no further. But let us examine a little more minutely, this self-styled regular system. Is it in reality of ancient origin? Did Hippocrates that great Father of Medicine hold the same opinions and practice the same as the rational school (so styled) of our day. Certainly not. There has always been the greatest difference in the practice of the prevailing schools. Having no such thing as a law of cure they have sought by the most opposite and absurd methods to eradicate or palliate the ills of mankind and have been changing and shifting from one theory to another and using the most ridiculous preparations and heterogeneous compounds.

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that a weak mind guided by false reason could resort to. They are ever changing and unstable. The members of this self-styled ancient system claim the favorable opinion that they have enjoyed of many great men, men who have shed lustre upon the honorable profession of which they have been members. Far be it from us to endeavor to pluck one single stone from their monuments or rob them of anything belonging to their fame. But did not these very men feel the want of more certainty and less que-  
-ring in the system of Medicine. Great men lived before Newton, and Columbus, but did they discover the Law of universal gravitation or the existence of this glorious and important portion of our earth? Many very great and good men have been the victims of error, both in Theory, and in Practice. So what can save this system from being what we call it the school of accident.

Having examined its claims to be called the rational, and regular, school, we will now allege something against it to show that it is not founded upon that sure foundation experimental experience. And in the first place its theories are false, and uncertain.

They are false because when tried by that unerring test, experiment they are found to fail. The doctrine that diseases are caused by material foreign matters in the human body cannot be substantiated. The theory that diseases are cured by inducing an opposing malady is just as fallacious and so on to the end of the chapter.

Then again their knowledge of drugs can only be considered an accidental knowledge. Where is the drug that has been proven before it was tried upon the sick? The few ideas of the action of a medicine which can be picked up at the bedside of the patient are about as reliable, as the flight of

birds in foretelling future events. If it were not so why has not some reliable rule been discovered for their use. One of the great lights of this self sufficient school in speaking of the state of medicine in his day was not very far from right when he said the healing art was a science of conjecture improved by practice.

After what we have written upon the false claim of the self styled regular school to be called rational we do not intend to write much in regard to other systems which are more or less closely allied in practice although differing in principle. In all a vast deal of error is mingled with just enough truth to make the world in doubt about the matter or else they are masked in mystery and seek to arouse the notice of mankind through the gratification of their curiosity, and hence we have secret nostrums and ambiguous compounds.

and a confusion which no man can understand much less practice. Now then what constitute a rational system of Medicine,

We hold that as nature created a thing so we received it. Art confers no new properties upon substances, but can only bring out those that are inherent. So with drugs we cannot create them nor can we change their properties but we can modify the effects of those powers or properties. Knowing from pure experiment that these effects are very numerous and complicated, that they affect different persons differently, that each one has an action peculiar to itself, it necessarily follows that if we wish to produce its proper effect we should take away every agent that could in anyway modify or break in upon its proper and legitimate effect or action. We should prove a thing before we adopt it. This is a maxim of prudence, and should be more generally followed.

If we follow this rule we will gradually acquire a knowledge of the properties of a number of

drugs and be prepared to continue our experiments still farther. Diseases are around us and we know the effects of these different agents upon the human body. Reason would teach us that if we gave those substances which produced symptoms opposite to those we found in our patient we would be doing that which the case demanded. But let us examine more carefully what we would be doing. Disease has seized upon certain parts affecting certain tissues or functions of those parts. There is no room for a contrary disease there and therefore the agent rather than be idle seizes upon the healthy tissues and deranges their functions and we have instead of one disease two.

Then there can be no law of cure in this case but a plain law of disease. That as many different and opposite drugs as you give just so many new and different diseases you create. We then take the opposite course. We give a substance that has produced symptoms similar to those of our patient and

now what follows? We find the same disease still existing but the symptoms very much aggravated. Now then what is to be done under the premises. Contraries cure not but create new forms of disease and Similars aggravated the existing disease. There must be a law for the cure of disease. We try the simillimum again in an attenuated dose and the symptoms are very much relieved and a few doses or a few days which are often just as good completes the cure. We have now determined by pure experiment, that diseases can be cured by giving such remedies as create similar symptoms in the healthy and why will not the law apply ~~apply~~ in all cases. We continue our experiments and find that it is invariably the same. We have now a law of cure, which will read in this wise *Similia Similibus Curauntur*. This law founded upon and perfected by pure experimentation becomes more and

more certain and now let us in a few words sum up the claims of the different systems.

In the first place there must be a true knowledge of disease. Now the only way of arriving at such a dissideration is by carefully studying and properly interpreting the symptoms. This cannot be done with certainty therefore let us take the symptoms of the disease as manifested externally as the disease itself. The same way as we accept the indications of the hands of a watch as a statement of the movements which have occurred within. This is rational and only held by the Homoeopathic school.

In the second place there must be a law of cure which is applicable to all cases. None but Homoeopathists have such a law.

and in the third place before we can have a true picture of the properties of a drug it must be proven upon a number of healthy persons and the symptoms recorded. And this is the mode adopted by Homoeopaths, and only by them. Therefore we arrive

at this conclusion that of all systems of medicine the world has ever known or been at all acquainted with Homoeopathy possesses the best claim to be called rational or even to be called a system. And while its members continue to follow the directions of its great discoverer we believe they will be continually acquiring more power over disease and gaining the confidence of community and the world until the baseless fabrics of error and uncertainty which have so long and so fatally dazzled the vision of the world will crumble down either burying its defenders beneath its ruins or forcing them to flee to our more noble and more rational system for refuge. We desire the supremacy of truth over error and if the Homoeopathic system is false let it share the same fate but let Truth which is mighty eventually prevail

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